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DISRESPECT FOR LANGUAGE

"They order," said the Sentimental Traveler, "this matter better in France": yet it is precisely from France that we hear the loudest outcry over the inability of the rising generation to use with vigor, exactitude and delicacy that marvelous instrument of expression, the mother tongue. The products of the press, it is said, are lamentably inelegant and incorrect, youths at school and university—students of science, law, history, of literature itself—cannot equal their predecessors of two decades ago in the arrangement, method and clearness of composition, to say nothing of taste and elegance. The young engineers are incapable of writing intelligible and well ordered reports. Even teachers are infected with the common decadence. And the complaint comes not only from literary men and other artistic spirits, but from scientists, physicians, engineering experts, manufacturers and merchants as well. Such is the condition labeled rather startlingly "*la crise du français*."

In a review article, which at once attained celebrity, an eminent critic proclaims this decadence definitive and

without remedy. French, he thinks, will cease to be written or understood, excepting by a small number of the elect: the generality will use a language which is "imprecise, vague, formless, confused, which no one therefore will understand very well, but which will serve as a rather rudimentary and barbarous means of communication." On the other hand, a large association of the hopeful and resolute, consisting of members from every walk of life and from every district of the country, has been formed for the defense of French culture. Whether or not "they order this matter better in France," they assuredly order it with the utmost thoroughness and under the impulse of an invincible conviction.

That the French tongue should lose its lucid beauty would indeed be sufficient occasion for much perturbation of spirit. But France is not alone in her plight. The same sort of complaint, though not so vehement and not so persistent, is heard from other lands. As we listen to these voices of lamentation, we can hardly escape the persuasion that we live in an age of disrespect for language.

The causes of this deplorable tendency are variously estimated. "It is due to the decline in the study of Latin and Greek," cries one. "The usurpations of science are to blame," exclaims another, "for even language and literature are mutilated by this implacable tyrant." Still others attribute the fault to the overcrowding of the curriculum in the secondary schools; to a too early specialization in vocational training; to the dislike on the part of pupils and parents of intellectual effort; to the perpetual reading of newspapers and the consequent neglect of literary masterpieces; to a vile democracy, which will not tolerate any superiority in culture, but enviously pulls down every elevated ideal to its own dull level.

Finally and incontrovertibly, it is asserted that the only explanation of the phenomenon is to be extracted from some impalpable quintessence called the Spirit of the Age.

All of the causes mentioned—educational, political and social—operate with especial force in these United States of America. That we therefore lead the world in disrespect for language can of course be neither demonstrated nor disproved, but our failings in this direction are undeniably obvious.

In our land the present is supreme. The complexity and fullness of modern life fill every waking hour. We have scarcely time to look about us, much less to dwell affectionately and reverently upon the past. Far from saying to the fleeting moment: "Stay, thou art so fair!", we hurry on to that which is to come. This haste, this restlessness, this distraction, and the constant effort to gather fresh advantages, often render us heedless of the treasures we already possess, and especially of that treasure of treasures, our mother tongue. Not only does this condition exist in our cities, but also in regions remote from these centres of activity; for rapid and continuous communication so unites town and country that practically all are drawn within the same circle of ideas and are stimulated to strive for the same ends.

To stop this rushing current is as hopeless as to oppose the Mississippi in its march to the sea. We must seek therefore, not to retard, but to utilize the tide of time. Immense benefit and profit it indubitably brings, and yet it is also a violently destructive force. We must endeavor to tame its fury, for though it will hurry on without our aid and in spite of any foolish resistance we may be tempted to offer, one plain duty of education is to rescue unharmed from the devouring sweep of innovation the

precious gifts of the past. Civilized man commands, for use or abuse, for ornament or disfigurement, a highly developed literary language, the harvest of ages, the legacy of millions; assuredly every resource provided by the life around us should be employed to preserve from injury this priceless inheritance.

Can it be, as some maintain, that Democracy is hostile to excellence of speech? or is not this, in truth, a superficial view, largely influenced by temporary phenomena, by prejudice and by lack of perspective? Some, it seems, cannot see the wood for the trees. What is language, but the collective product of a whole people? And what is literary language, but this same product handled with particular skill? Those are not the most loyal democrats who think that any style is good enough for the mob, provided it bellows out with uncouth fury the commonplaces that make a wide popular appeal. Though the nutriment of the spirit, linguistic as well as conceptual, admits of no pure food law, the people are entitled to the best, and they will ultimately demand and obtain that which is wholesome and suitable to their needs. True democracy, however it levels down exorbitant political privilege, can never have for its object the destruction of intellectual eminence. Rather will it utilize such eminence for the general good and strive to lift as many as possible to higher planes. No flat reaches of mediocrity will suffice; if uniformity must be the aim—and this is mainly doubtful—let it be a uniformity of excellence. Ariel is not to vanish in the loveliness of ineffectual music; he is to remain with us, and all his choicest gifts are to be bestowed on a glorified Caliban.

When the purposes of Democracy in the sphere of mind are thus conceived, it seems incredible that language, the

chief organ of culture, should be allowed to suffer degradation. Perhaps, after all, the extent of the evil has been exaggerated. Has there really been a decline?

Our daily utterance, of course, we cannot measure with that of yesterday, but the imperfections of ordinary talk are notorious, and the accurate speaker, we must believe, has always been rare. As to the written word, the hindrances to forming a correct judgment are hardly slighter. To-day practically everybody writes, and thousands of the incompetent, alas!, not only write, but print. Can any reasonable observer expect this prodigious output to exhibit mastery of expression, a mastery to which, though many feel called, few are really chosen? In fact, much of this medley is better than could have been looked for, our daily newspapers themselves being generally not ill written, considering the circumstances under which they are composed. On the other hand, enormous quantities of inferior "current literature," in place of literature of the highest type, cannot fail to have a deleterious effect upon both thinking and speech.

That we should not feel secure in regard to our vernacular is indicated by the Oxford criticism of a select body of educated young men, our Rhodes scholars. These, we are told, "have not been accustomed to write and express themselves clearly and with precision." In terms that sound somewhat overcharged, another teacher writes: "Some are terribly rough intellectually, with little or no literary sense and very limited command over expression. In the composition of an English essay they have, as a rule, almost everything to learn. Their linguistic attainments are also, as a rule, slender." One may note, furthermore, in places where it should not be expected, a falling off in accuracy and neatness of phrase. Not to

speak of ephemeral trash, our best monthly periodicals are not guiltless, and serious volumes of literary studies too often betray an inexperienced and even clumsy hand. There can be little doubt that an evil exists which must be faced and overcome.

Let there be no misconception, however, as to the object in view. This object is not a fixed standard. It is not a code of rigid linguistic laws. It is not the establishment of a dictatorship of grammarians and lexicographers to tyrannize over men of letters. This would indeed be itself a disrespect for language, and success in such a project, if possible, would be fatal. When a literary tongue cannot change, it must die, as Latin died under the despotism of the humanists. The pedantic purist, though useful doubtless as a conservative influence, can no longer dominate in discussions of proper current usage. Overprecision becomes ridiculous, and opposition to innovation futile. We must even grow resigned to irreparable losses, for they are a part of the tragic waste of nature, which intelligent effort may diminish, but cannot wholly prevent.

Too high a value, moreover, must not be placed upon unessentials. A dilettante elegance may continue to be the harmless amusement of cultivated leisure, but assuredly it can never be a model for normal communication. Even grace and beauty must remain the accomplishment of the few. In this regard, there is a close analogy between language and architecture, for in both we find a plain style for practical use, and at the same time a variety of more conspicuous styles designed to satisfy aesthetic cravings. To build a foundry after the model of the Parthenon or of Notre Dame would be no more absurd than to write a treatise on potato-bugs in the manner of Walter Pater or Thomas Carlyle. In comparison with the

mass, these elaborate manifestations are exceptional, but the universal qualities, simplicity and directness, are accessible to ordinary abilities. Lovers of language cannot indeed too strongly repudiate an attitude of fastidious delicacy which is out of touch with life; for words are no playthings, nor is speech a mere game of skill.

What is in reality to be dreaded and strenuously combated is a heedless clumsiness of expression, combined with poverty of vocabulary and verbal inaccuracy. These faults, widely prevalent at the best, are rendered epidemic through the general practice of dictating to a stenographer. The hasty first draft too frequently stands as the final form. It is, to a certain extent, as though we had receded to a primitive epoch of the exclusively spoken word and were thus endangering the literary cultivation of centuries. A movement in this direction would actually be a decline toward barbarism, for the oral language, fundamental as it is to the philologist, is inadequate to embody the subtlest products of intellect, to say nothing of the beauties of art. It is the vigorous but homely stem out of which the flower springs. The danger of such complete retrogression is, perhaps, not imminent, but there is every prospect of extensive deterioration, for if even the highly cultured are thus to be numbered among the transgressors, what can be expected of the comparatively uneducated? Little less than linguistic anarchy, which the rapid perusal of journalistic headlines only tends to intensify. Doubtless, also, the ephemeral jargon of sport has wrought more extensive ravages than ever before, and the abuse of slang has so impoverished the daily intercourse of myriads that they have lost all command of any other language. Moreover, in addition to these conditions and influences, an unbroken stream of immigration floods our cities with the

confusion of Babel. Many of our newcomers largely forget their native tongue, yet never acquire proficiency in ours; so that, both of our own native progeny and of the progeny of the old world, we have amongst us, multiplied by thousands, the man without a language.

With full allowance for exaggeration, the situation is sufficiently serious. How is it to be dealt with? Shall we for the defense of the vernacular inaugurate a society like the new French league or the older, widely ramified and very flourishing German *Sprachverein*? Doubtless such a body would be invaluable in keeping the agitation alive, but at present the burden is thrown almost entirely upon our schools.

It is a heavier burden, indeed, than they have ever borne before. Not only have they to educate, as democracy rightly demands, a vast army of young people who in previous epochs received little or no tuition, but in an incalculable number of cases the instruction that used to be given by parents in the home, and that could best be given by competent parents, is abandoned to the teacher in the class-room. To no subject is this statement more justly applicable than to the native language, for excellence of speech, like courtesy in behavior, is a social virtue, and can, as a rule, be acquired only through years of persistent, patient training. The little barbarian, ruled by nurses and nature, and picking up too readily what is furnished by the street and the stable, is apt to be shocking in both word and deed, and the influences that shall succeed in making him a civilized member of society must be pervasive and continuous. The school is here at a disadvantage; its powers are not equal to the demands made upon it. Nevertheless, it must do its best, and if we may judge from the curricula of our institutions—

elementary, secondary and collegiate—a strenuous effort in this direction is being made.

This effort obviously deserves every encouragement, in spite of certain reserves that may be made concerning the general vagueness of aims and methods. Nobody can consider it desirable, for instance, that our schools should produce a brood of youthful hypocrites, who appreciate literature only when writing examination papers, and in their honest hearts long to drown their books “for reading and practice” “deeper than did ever plummet sound.” The endeavor to heat a frigid imagination up to at least sixty per cent on a scale of set questions is about as wise as an attempt to stimulate the ardors of a lover by examining him on the angelic qualities, not of the adored object, but of the object we think he ought to adore, and then making a passing mark the prerequisite for unwilling entrance into the holy state of matrimony. To inspire love for an imposed task is the gift of the exceptional teacher, which no science or art of pedagogy can create; yet even in the absence of literary enthusiasm, a practical command of expression can to a large extent be inculcated, provided that the proper means be employed.

And the means must be found. Education is suffering a world-wide dislocation. The trouble is not that “the old order changeth, yielding place to new,” but that the old has lost its power before the new has been moulded to take its place. Hence the disorganization, the groping in the dark, the theorizing, the disastrous experimentation. The widening of knowledge has brought an embarrassment of riches, a thousand thousand things that everybody ought to know, but simply cannot for lack of time. The age is past in which a Lord Chancellor could take all knowledge for his province, just as the age is past in which Latin,

Greek and mathematics could constitute a liberal education.

The result upon our schools has been twofold; on the one hand, the crowding in of too many subjects, and on the other, though this seems contradictory, an over-specialization. The importance of the fact may excuse the triteness of the statement, for the conditions and their results are visible on every side. The growth of our schools of engineering is, for example, phenomenal, and, parallel with the increase in the number of students, is a narrowing of the curriculum to purely technical subjects. These, it is obvious, cannot give linguistic or literary power. Doubtless a passionate admiration for the 'Faerie Queene' is not an essential factor in the success of a builder of bridges, but he assuredly does require the ability to say what he means in unmistakable form; and even a little literary taste would probably do him no harm. If the sort of instruction which gives command of expression is to be excluded from engineering schools, as perhaps it needs to be, the standard fixed for admission to such schools should generally be much higher in this regard than it is at present. We could not, and would not, demand that our engineers should be philologists, any more than that our philologists should be engineers; but it ought to be regarded as essential that workers in strictly scientific lines should have at least the linguistic acquirements sufficient for the needs of a truly intellectual man. To vocational training in law and medicine the same remark applies with increased force, for here a deficiency is likely to prove fatal. To insist in this connection upon such requirements in schools of liberal arts and sciences would assuredly appear superfluous. What particularly concerns us of the Modern Language Association is the care that in

every case neither the variety nor the limitation of subjects should interfere with the efficiency of linguistic instruction. Whatever must be curtailed in an overburdened curriculum, or however intense must be the concentration upon a specialty, the last sacrifice to be made should be the means of human communication, "the power which has civilized human life," for it is the fundamental necessity, as well as the most perfect instrument of the human spirit and, in some respects, its finest artistic achievement.

To take this stand is not to range oneself with scolding reactionaries and hidebound opponents of progress. It involves no feeble lament for the good old times. The study of the best linguistic usage, and the insistence upon it in practice, constitute no interruption of the course of civilization, but rather the continuation, the acceleration of that course. When we get something new and good, we are not called upon to relinquish all our fathers had. It cannot really be that every ancient value is but a mere trifle. Serious consideration refuses to accept any such appraisal. Nor, on the other hand, can the true lover of language join in the outcry against the practical in education, an outcry which resounded equally in ancient Athens and in renaissance Florence, when they were, as viewed from this distance, the ideal homes of art, philosophy and letters. Let us not be the dupes of high sounding phrases. Education, at least for the majority, ought to be entirely practical and largely utilitarian. And what can be more practical, what more utilitarian, than mastery of language? Concerning the utility of the vernacular there can be no question; but the thorough study of any language whatever, be it ancient or modern, is also practical, if it strengthens the intellect and reacts beneficially upon the mother tongue.

Such a truism craves your pardon, but it may serve to suggest a fundamental consideration. We of America have, in addition to the general requirements of culture, an especial need for the study of some language other than our own. Separated as we are from sister nations, the impulse to such study is less strong here than in Europe. Foreign speech is often treated even with contempt. The absence from English, moreover, of some of the more delicate syntactical distinctions tends to dull our linguistic sense. Our very freedom of speech, too, causes us to lose certain refinements of expression. "The short but ugly word" is typical, not only of lack of restraint, but of deficiency of vocabulary. We may not regret the time when eloquence consisted in the ability to say everything you wished without being cast into the Bastille, but we can still believe that it is not necessary to vociferate at the top of one's lungs in order to make oneself heard. In speech, as in action, patience under restriction is our least failing, and a disdain for rigorous form reacts injuriously upon our habits of thought. No remedy for such shortcomings can equal in efficiency the prolonged, exact and minute study of a foreign language. Whoever has mastered a subtle linguistic distinction has accomplished an intellectual achievement.

One of the prime advantages in the study of Latin and Greek has been that there could be no doubt as to the object of the course. Practically no one has, for generations, expected to make use of these ancient tongues as a medium of communication. They have held their place in the curriculum purely as a discipline, linguistic and literary, and whatever else they may or may not have accomplished, they assuredly have succeeded in inculcating a respect, if not invariably a love, for language. If, as the

signs of the times indicate, the influence of Latin and Greek is to be enfeebled in our system of education, we are driven to ask: Can the modern languages effect the same result? The question can not be answered positively, since the data for a well-founded conclusion appear to be lacking, but it may be said without much hesitation that they cannot attain this object unless they have the object in view. It is no by-product which will unexpectedly enrich the worker who is trying to bring forth something else.

Here lies an obstacle to the full success of modern language teaching—a divided aim. It is perfectly legitimate in many cases to strive for no more than a mere reading acquaintance with a foreign tongue, to be satisfied with providing an instrument which may be employed for acquiring information in other departments; but such an aim must be rigidly discriminated from the broader purpose of training the linguistic sense. The acquisition, for example, of a sufficient working knowledge of French or German demands comparatively little time; but many years of diligent application under expert and careful guidance will usually fall short of what can in any proper sense be called mastery. Even if our wagon is not hitched to an unattainable star, the attempt to obtain from modern languages a linguistic training equal to that obtained from Latin and Greek will demand a parallel amount of continuous time and effort.

Educational opinion has, indeed, not recognized any such theory, and because pupils with a mere smattering of French and German exhibit the mental deficiencies natural to such inadequate training, it is hastily inferred that the fault is inherent in the subject-matter itself. But responsibility is not justly imposed unless a corresponding

opportunity is afforded. We have no quarrel with the ancients. The conflict here is to be waged, not between the classics and modern languages, but between a system of education which neglects and ill-treats linguistic discipline, and one in which such discipline holds its normal and necessary place. In addition to the mother tongue, some language, whatever it be, should be studied intensely, consecutively, exhaustively, so that it may exert all its beneficent influence, so that it may be really worthy of respect and help to dispel the notion that any form of civilized speech can be cheapened into

"A liberal art that costs no pains
Of study, industry or brains."

Wide reading alone, advantageous as it undoubtedly is, can never produce this result. Patient, persistent, attentive effort is necessary for the acquisition of a thorough knowledge of idiom, while an appreciation of those delicate shades of meaning, which escape ossification in dictionaries and grammars, and often defy laborious elucidation, requires a keen and unhurried exercise of the reflective powers. Large quantities of intellectual fodder cannot be suddenly chewed and digested. Has not the desire to cover an extensive and attractive literary field too often induced with us a facile superficiality? The man of one book is, indeed, no present-day ideal, but an excess of breadth is as injurious as an excess of narrowness. Though circumstances may frequently oblige a student merely to catch the general drift of a passage, without attention to its explicit meaning, the habit of such negligence is fatal to linguistic attainment. Unless accurate reading is insisted upon and grammatical and verbal distinctions are minutely scrutinized, no language can claim to be a disciplinary study.

Many of the foregoing remarks have been frequently reiterated both at home and abroad, but with slight visible effect. Hundreds of teachers, too, whose voices are seldom or never raised, are engaged in the daily struggle to attain their ideals, and we are still far from the goal. The difficulties have come too fast to be successfully met. While the old type of school was droning away, modern society was transformed and became too varied for the education offered it. Excess of conservatism was followed by an equally excessive reaction. All the received values were upset and the feeling of proportion was lost. Every day brought forth its brand new revolutionary theory and systems of education were improvised over night. While the agitation put life into a moribund pedagogy, it also filled the educational world with confusion, from which we have not yet emerged. One difficulty was that capable teachers had not yet been prepared to undertake the new subjects, and even those who were sufficiently instructed were uncertain as to whither they were steering and whether they were to get there by sail or steam. For many reasons, some of which have already been mentioned, this condition was particularly aggravated in the case of the modern languages: and their situation still remains to a large extent unsatisfactory.

To provide for our secondary schools a competent and effective body of teachers of English, French and German is one of the most important practical tasks of our universities throughout the land. It is not too exaggerated a hope, indeed, that within a few years a majority of our high school teachers in every branch will be university graduates. Courses should therefore be designed which are specifically adapted to their professional needs. To detail such a line of study would be obviously presump-

tuous, but a few salient points may be indicated without risk of offence.

This association has from its inception stood for a high standard of scholarship. While the progress in this direction during the past thirty years has been eminently satisfactory, much inevitably remains to be accomplished. In fact, even if the goal should at any time seem to be won—a hardly conceivable supposition—any relaxation of effort would surely entail retrogression. We cannot cease for a moment to demand the highest possible attainments on the part of our teachers without facing the imminent danger of incompetence. If, on the whole, though even here not invariably, our colleges and universities possess men sufficiently learned in their subjects, it cannot be denied that too frequently teachers of modern languages in our secondary schools are not masters of the idiom they attempt to impart. In many cases this deficiency is at present unavoidable. The requisite supply of masters does not exist. It must be gradually provided by our institutions of higher education. The necessity is pressing, for what sort of respect can a pupil entertain for a language which his very teacher has not found it worth his while to acquire?

Command of present usage, however, is not sufficient. An ample knowledge of the historical development of the language taught and a reasonable familiarity with all periods of its literature, not merely from hearsay but from actual acquaintance with the texts, is an essential background for effective teaching even of the rudiments; for when laying foundations correctness is most urgent and without a thorough understanding the simplest explanations go far astray. Excess, however, is here also quite as dangerous as defect. The teacher of language and

literature sails between the Scylla of vague impressionism and the Charybdis of rigid system. His learning, indeed, can never be either too broad or too minute, but he must not fail to remember that his erudition is valuable in his class-room only as it serves to rescue him from mere mechanical routine, and that it becomes positively pernicious if used to overburden immature minds with unessentials; in other words, scholarship is for reserve power, not for pedantic display.

Our universities have of late been adversely criticized in some quarters because they require for the degree of doctor of philosophy a special investigation, the results of which must be embodied in a thesis. A narrow specialization, it is said, is the consequence, and the product is a group of teachers, each of whom has so long fixed his microscopic eye upon some insignificant literary or linguistic fact that he has lost the power of normal vision. "If it were so, it were a grievous fault," but this odious thesis they reprobate is nowhere the sole requirement, nor is narrowness an essential or exclusive characteristic of the specialist, in whose ranks, indeed, we may unquestionably count our broadest minded and most efficient teachers. In scholarship, as in other occupations, specialization is at present essential to success, and whatever evils inevitably attend it must be accepted along with its benefits. A wise foresight may diminish the one and increase the other.

While a virile intellect is not injured, but strengthened, by long continued concentration upon a single task, it cannot be denied that a certain type of weak and superficial brain produces and nourishes the abuse of specialization. The criticism, therefore, passed rather generally upon doctors of philosophy, is, no doubt, in some cases,

partly justified. The born pedant is, unfortunately, too often inclined rather to shape his ambition toward the vocation of teaching than to drift into other professions for which he is more obviously, though not more fundamentally, unqualified; and a narrow training will precisely fit his limited mind. This is the young person who carries away in triumph from his university career a barren method without content, empty form without substance, the pretence of learning and not the reality. In him a pitiful exaggeration of distorted trifles suffocates wholesome spiritual activity. He is the slave of science, not its master.

For such an individual, is the university, we may reasonably ask, expected to provide, not instruction alone, but also brains, drawn from some limbo near the moon? He should not be encouraged, it is true, but no syllable of recorded time gives hope that he can be wholly suppressed. It is in the case of his fellow student, who is fundamentally sane, but who as yet lacks a well developed sense of proportion, that an ill-balanced emphasis in higher training may lead to a temporary dislocation of values, a fault which must be rectified later, as we may be sure it will be, by experience, study and reflection. To save such a one from even momentary error is worth much pains. System in his literary researches he should be taught, but he should also be led to realize that literature is more than system. He should approach language as a natural phenomenon, to be investigated by a severe scientific method, but he should also feel that it is something to be loved and cherished and fashioned for noble use. In its own sphere, for him and for all, let science reign supreme; let an inferior versifier, when occasion demands, be more significant for the matter in hand than a world poet; let a few rough sentences in an obscure dialect have a higher

value than the most polished eloquence; in every field let the most rigorous tests give the most accurate information; but let our students in no case become so biased as to forget that these indispensable processes are not of universal import, and that the results of literary or linguistic scholarship can never be complete and symmetrical unless due weight is assigned to their human values.

If, on the whole, mere literary men have been unscholarly, too frequently scholars have been unliterary. In either case the fault is not easy to condone. There is slight excuse for dressing up misinformation in flamboyant phrase, and even less for disguising the results of serious thought and methodical investigation in slovenly and misleading forms of expression. From our coming teachers of languages, more than from any others, should be demanded a pure literary style; yet our teachers of physical science also, if they are to do their work aright, must not be lacking in this essential element of power. It is no false rhetoric that is required, no embroidered decoration or inflated eloquence, but the ability to speak and write with propriety, precision and finish. What can be more ridiculous than the inexact statement of exact fact? what more distressing than a confused assemblage of words serving as a sepulchre of truth?

The teachers of languages will be recreant to their charge if they do not stand unflinchingly for a thorough and continuous linguistic training. If there was formerly wasteful and ridiculous excess in teaching the word without the thing, that is no reason for plunging to the opposite extreme of teaching the thing without the word. A too exclusive preoccupation with either cramps and maims the human spirit and infallibly impairs its efficiency. There is no need of inquiring which is worse,

when both are bad. Our particular function, however, obliges us to emphasize the word. Our part in the combat against ignorance and heedlessness is to oppose and to conquer disrespect for language.

The teacher who is to accomplish such a task can be no inferior or even ordinary man. He should command a balanced scholarship, at once minute and broad; he should possess sound grammatical knowledge, together with an instinct for good usage and a refined taste; he should write and speak with lucidity and precision, even if distinction of style must remain for him a mere elusive aspiration. While realizing that "culture is the study of perfection," he must admit no uncertainty of aim, but unite definite and exact drill with expansive and wide-ranging inspiration. He must be eminently practical both in his studies and his instruction, yet feel, with Aristotle, that "to be always seeking after the useful does not become free and exalted souls." Such a man will investigate and specialize, but he will also read widely in books that have little or no connection with his specialty. He will thus in full measure exemplify the fact that productive scholarship is not inconsistent with breadth of culture. Such attainments will help to form the impressive personality so essential for the literary and linguistic guidance of our prematurely sophisticated youth. Enthusiasm yoked with reasonableness, and dignity devoid of affectation, will impose esteem even upon the listless and the irreverent, and as the teacher respects his language, so will his pupils learn to respect it. The ideal is lofty, but not unattainable. It calls for a confidence that defies discouragement and for an unalterable conviction that the striving is for no vain bauble, but for an object of inestimable worth.